



# Victorian Local Governance Association

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Andrew Wilkie MP  
Chair  
Joint Select Committee on Gambling Reform  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

## **VLGA submission to the Inquiry into the advertising and promotion of gambling services in sport**

Dear Mr Wilkie,

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry.

The VLGA is a unique peak body for councillors, community leaders and local governments working to build and strengthen their capacity to work together for progressive social change.

Our membership consists of local governments, community organisations and individuals. Our Vision is for Victorian communities to be inclusive, sustainable and dynamic, characterised by strong leadership and effective local governance.

We convene the Local Government Working Group on Gambling. The Working Group consists of local government councillors and officers, as well as community organisations concerned with gambling issues. The group generally focuses on issues relating to electronic gaming machines (EGMs), their local impacts, consumer protection regulation and harm minimisation – including through planning regulations.

The assessment of applications for new EGM venues and for additional machines is an important duty of local governments. Many local governments in Victoria also have gambling policies and programs which aim to reduce the incidence of problem gambling.

The VLGA is concerned about the negative impacts of all forms of gambling. In particular, we are concerned about the sudden and large increase in young men betting on sports and gambling online, which has become more prevalent through aggressive marketing and the introduction of new technologies (such as smart phones).

Research has shown that marketing tactics by the gambling industry have been very effective in marketing to young men in particular. This research found that within a few years, the saturation of marketing materials at sports matches for sports betting has ingrained gambling into sports where previously it was not connected, including AFL and rugby.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas S, Lewis S, Duong J and McLeod C 2012, 'Sports betting marketing during sporting events: a stadium and broadcast census of Australian Football League matches', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* Apr, Vol. 36, Issue 2, pp. 145-52

The VLGA believes that the Australian Government has a role to play in regulating sports betting and the advertising of gambling.

The VLGA is concerned with the promotion of live odds during sports games, as well as advertising and sponsorship. These promotions serve to normalise gambling, which is of particular concern with regard to the many children and young people who watch sports events at the venue and on television.

We provide the following recommendations for consideration by the Joint Select Committee:

1. A national code for gambling advertising restrictions and sponsorship, similar to those for tobacco and alcohol, be developed
2. Funds be allocated for a national harm minimisation program including the implementation of a public awareness campaign which would be broadcast during live sporting events and broadcasts
3. Research into how gambling marketing strategies affect the behaviours of community sub-groups (e.g. young male sports fans and children) be resourced.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

**Cr Samantha Dunn**  
**President**